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Chimney Corner Graduates



By
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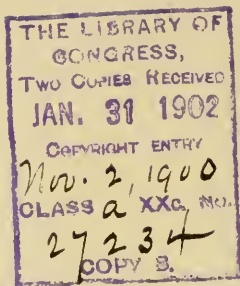
THE HOME CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOL

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS



COMPLIMENTS OF
**THE HOME CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOL**
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS


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I

UNDREDS of young men in this country, because they cannot go to college, give up the thought of ever becoming educated, relinquish the happiness, honors, and usefulness which education can alone bring, and enter upon early manhood as self-accepted failures.

I should like to link my arm within that of each of these young men and walk out with him some night when the heavens are clear. Then for every star that he could point out to me, beginning with the brightest, I would undertake to point out for him some shining name among the living or the dead, who, without college or teacher, transformed his inner darkness into light, his ignorance into knowledge, and is now set, either as a greater or as a lesser light, in the firmament of the world's benefactors. The dawn would break and we should still be talking; and for nights

to come there would be no end for the names, as there would be no number for the stars.

Not lack of schools and teachers, nor want of books and friends; not the most despised rank or calling; not poverty nor ill health nor deafness nor blindness; not hunger, cold, weariness, care, nor sickness of heart, have been able to keep men and women in this life from self-education.

What is it that you want to learn and cannot?

Is it writing? Remember Murray, the linguist, who made a pen for himself out of a stem of heather, sharpening it in the fire, and for a copy book used a worn-out wool card.

Is it English grammar? Remember Cobbett, who learned it while he was making sixpence a day, often with no light but winter fire light, and often crowded away from this and reduced almost to starvation if he spent a penny for pens or paper.

Have you no money to buy

books? Remember More, who borrowed Newton's *Principia* and copied it for himself.

Is it the multiplication table you wish to learn? Remember Biddle, the poorest of boys, afterward known throughout the world, who learned it up to a million by means of peas, marbles, and a bag of shot.

Is it music? Remember Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, who, with no ear for music, mastered harmonies for himself because he had determined to build an organ.

Is it Latin? Remember the son of a poor jeweler, afterward Sir Samuel Romilly, who learned it untaught.

Is it Greek or Hebrew? Remember the dull carpenter apprentice, Lee, afterwards master of many tongues and professor at Cambridge, who began by buying a Latin grammar, sold his Latin books and bought Greek ones, sold his Greek books to buy Hebrew ones, always teaching himself.

Is it geology? Remember Hugh Miller, who learned in a stone quarry.

There is little taught in the schools that men have not taught themselves amid difficulties and despite obstacles greater, perhaps, than you have ever known.



II



ARE you hindered and disheartened by your position in life and the sort of trade you follow?

Well, what then, in heaven's name are you? A barber? So was Arkwright, founder of the cotton manufacture of England, who began by shaving people in a cellar at a penny a shave.

Are you a coal miner? So was Bewick, founder of wood engraving.

Are you the son of a poor farmer? So was Sir Isaac Newton, the sun itself in the heaven of science.

A bricklayer? So was Ben Johnson, one of the most illustrious names in English literature.

A tailor? So was brave Hobson, admiral of the navy.

A butcher? So was Wolsey, the most illustrious cardinal of England.

The fireman of an engine? So was Stephenson, inventor of the locomotive.

A shoemaker? So was Edwards, the profound naturalist.

A bookbinder? So was Faraday, afterwards lecturer on chemistry before the Royal Institution.

From every human craft men have started out in quest of knowledge and found wisdom.



III



YOU say, Ah! These were extraordinary men; I am ordinary and cannot do what they did. Certainly not. You miss the lesson: do what you can with your powers and opportunities as faithfully as they did what they could with theirs. Then perhaps you will find yourself no longer ordinary.

For what made these men extraordinary? Genius? Don't you believe it.

If you could collect them into one august company and bid each rise and state the secret of his success, perhaps not one would say, my genius.

One would say, my patience; another, hard work; another, energy; another, perseverance; another, memory; another, common sense; another, self-reliance; another, the habit of attention; another, not wasting time; another, the capacity to take infinite pains.

All the answers would be the simplest; and these are the old, old answers that have been given since the world was made and must be given while the world shall stand.

Nor can anything new be said to you that has not been repeated to every generation seeking knowledge this side of the youthful priests of Egypt and the calm scholars of Greece, except this one thing, that self-education is more practicable in the United States at the present time than in any land in the past.

There are four reasons for this: books are cheaper than ever before; text-books are now made simple and easy to meet the wants of students at home; much of the knowledge taught in the universities is now put within reach of the chimney-corner student in a popular form through correspondence instruction, newspapers, weekly and monthly publications; and in every village, so widespread has education become, will be found some persons to whom the solitary, earnest

toiler can apply for suggestion and guidance.

These advantages the self-educated men of the past never enjoyed.

What is your further necessary outfit? It is very simple: a few hours of leisure out of every twenty-four; a little money; and the determination to act as teacher to the powers of your own mind; single-handed if need be, but under competent guidance, personal or otherwise, if you can secure it.

Yes, that is the whole truth; teach yourself. *You Can; If Ever Educated, Whether In College Or Not, You Must.* For what is a college? A place where a set of men will train the powers of your mind for you and require you to absorb knowledge.

No. I was thrown with many hundreds of young men in my university; afterwards I taught hundreds of others.

It is my firm conviction that the greatest number of those who failed did so from this mistaken idea of a college as a place where

they would be trained and be taught.

But *A College Is Mainly a Place Where You Train Yourself And Teach Yourself*—under guidance and with certain advantages.

In a gymnasium who carries on your muscular education? You. You tug, you expand your chest, you push, pull, strike, run.

A teacher in a college no more trains your mind than one in a gymnasium trains your body. He gives out from day to day mental work for you to train your powers upon. You go off to your chimney corner and do this or not. Then you go back to him and he finds out what you have done; whether you have trained memory, patience, self-reliance, attention, capacity for work, and capacity to take pains.

But all the teachers in the world cannot train these powers for you. They only guide, encourage, inspire, as you draw these things out of your own nature, toiling in some chimney corner of solitary effort.

But if you must train them in college, can you not train them

out of college? Life is the answer.

Life, the world, trains every power to the highest exercise and efficiency in persons who never saw a college or had a teacher, save that of a dominating purpose.

Here, then, perhaps, we reach your greatest difficulty; you believe you can attend to the training of your powers, but for guiding them in the pursuit of knowledge a teacher is indispensable.

True. But now make your greatest discovery of the goodness and wisdom of nature, who realized that while few of the myriads of her human creatures could ever pay for a teacher, all of them needed to be taught, and so bestowed upon the human mind not only the power to learn but also the power to teach itself.

She has made you to yourself both pupil and teacher, school child and school master.

If you will only learn well all that your mind can teach you, your education will never lack breadth and depth and sublimity.

Who taught the first astrono-

mer? Who the most advanced one living to-day?

Who taught Gray American botany, or Audubon American ornithology, or Franklin science, or Edison invention?

Who in every age and land has taught those who knew more of any subject than all others?

Who taught these teachers in colleges?

All have been taught by the teacher you possess—the teacher within.

On going to college a young man's first astounding discovery is often this: that every teacher there sets him to teaching himself.

The better college student you are, the more independent you will be of every other teacher than yourself.

If in college you cannot teach yourself at all, you fail and education becomes impossible.

But if you have to teach yourself in college, cannot you do this out of college? Especially when modern correspondence methods bring all the guiding influences of

school and college and teacher to your very door?

The builders of our governmental machinery little thought that the postal service was to perform so beneficent a function in the cause of popular education.

Teaching by Mail makes every home, every shop, every place where there are human hearts to aspire, a centre of education, and brings possibilities of the completest development.

It is beyond the power of mind to comprehend in its fullness the good done the country in this way.

Do you ask verification? Study the world about you; life is the answer. Life, the world, is self-taught in a thousand cases where it is college-bred in one.

Thus, whether you go to college or not, all education is essentially self-education; and in the truest, noblest sense of patient, energetic self-reliance every graduate is a chimney corner graduate.

JAN. 31 1902

